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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 27 February 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I regret to inform you of the further escalation of tensions and deterioration of the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, due to the incessant, systematic brutality and aggression by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people.

Today, the Israeli occupying forces killed another young Palestinian man in a military raid in the pre-dawn hours in the town of Bir Zeit north of Ramallah. Mo'taz Washaha, age 24, was brutally killed in the raid when the occupying forces besieged the home for approximately six hours and then began arbitrarily firing on it with heavy weaponry, including artillery shells. The occupying forces claimed that the intention was to once again arrest Washaha, who had been previously imprisoned by Israel. The manner in which this young man was violently pursued and attacked indicates a wilful intention to kill by the occupying forces. Moreover, it is yet another testament to the pervasive insecurity and abnormality of life for the Palestinian people, particularly Palestinian males, under Israel's occupation, including those who have suffered Israeli imprisonment and detention and the abuses and torture rampant in captivity and must live in constant fear of repeated arrest and violence by the Israeli occupying forces.

Such brutality by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population is being perpetrated in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and human rights law. The legal obligation to ensure the protection of civilians is being deliberately and systematically violated by Israel, as it continues its military attacks and excessive use of force against unarmed, defenceless civilians throughout the cities, towns, villages and refugee camps of Occupied Palestine, exhibiting a cruel disregard for human life and inflicting civilian casualties and widespread suffering and trauma, including among children and youth, women and elderly

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persons. Since the resumption of peace negotiations in July 2013, the Israeli occupying forces have killed 44 Palestinians and injured hundreds of other civilians and have carried out more than 3,360 military raids, including air strikes against the besieged Gaza Strip. Moreover, the Palestinian people continue to endure other human rights violations and crimes at the hands of the occupying Power, including, but not limited to, the confiscation and colonization of their land, the destruction of their homes and properties, forced displacement, imprisonment and administrative detention, physical and psychological abuse and torture, settler terrorism, exploitation and all means of collective punishment.

Even the right to peaceful protest and non-violent resistance to the occupation are being violently suppressed by the Israeli occupying forces, with routine attacks perpetrated against civilian demonstrators. In recent days, dozens of Palestinians have sustained injuries due to such excessive force. This includes attacks today on a protest in Al-Khalil, where the occupying forces shot rubber-coated steel bullets and tear gas canisters at civilian protesters, the injury of several Palestinians in a raid today in Nablus, and the injury of at least 13 Palestinians yesterday in Al-Khalil in a protest marking the twentieth anniversary of the massacre committed by an Israeli settler against Palestinian worshippers at Al-Ibrahimi Mosque, an act of terror that the Security Council rightly condemned in its resolution 904 (1994). Also, this week, yet another Palestinian man died in Israeli detention. Jihad Abdelrahman Al-Taweel, age 47, died on 24 February 2014, as a result of critical injuries sustained in an assault by Israeli prison guards earlier this month.

In this connection, we draw attention to a new report by the human rights organization Amnesty International and its findings that the Israeli occupying forces routinely use unnecessary, arbitrary and brutal force against the Palestinian civilian population, constituting a clear pattern of unlawful killings and injuries that appear to be a matter of policy. Further, as concluded in the report, "such arbitrary and abusive use of force contravenes policing standards that protect the right to life and other human rights and they also violate international humanitarian law applicable in territories under foreign military occupation, including the West Bank".

The international community must view such human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law by Israel, the occupying Power, with utmost seriousness, as they are aggravating tensions, worsening the fragile situation on the ground and imposing severe hardship on the Palestinian people. The persistence of this unlawful behaviour also reconfirms the deep doubts among many regarding Israel's claimed commitment to peace, indicating that Israel is actually not interested in ending its nearly 47-year occupation. Moreover, such actions allude to an intention by Israel to provoke and incite against the Palestinian people, their leadership, their land and their holy places, particularly Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Occupied East Jerusalem, until it completely destabilizes the situation and sabotages the peace efforts being exerted by the United States, with the support of the League of Arab States, the Quartet and the international community as a whole.

The international community, particularly the Security Council, has a responsibility to address this critical situation in order to avert a further escalation and salvage the prospects for a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which remains a threat to international peace and security. Here, it must be stressed that the existence of peace negotiations does not absolve the Security Council of its Charter responsibilities and role in this regard. Israeli violations must be condemned

and it must be demanded of the occupying Power that it cease all of its violations and crimes against the Palestinian people. To remain silent in the face of such gross violations is unacceptable and will only bolster Israel's impunity and further delay the realization of a just and lasting peace and an end to the human suffering caused by this prolonged, tragic conflict.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 486 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 25 February 2014 (A/ES-10/617-S/2014/128) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feda **Abdelhady-Nasser**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.